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# Carl Stone

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gets all the way into the meat." The beef ribs were especially good, the dense meat smoked a luminous red under its black crust.

"Mom's," a tribal, free-jazz-like piece with wild computer drums, and "Gadberry's," which sounds something like an Aaron Copland take on Javanese gamelan music, received their local premieres in a Little Tokyo art gallery just last month.

A half-hour after lunch at Mom's, our third that day, we found ourselves driving yet another order of barbecue, from Gadberry's up on Broadway, to a grassy traffic island at 95th and Broadway that Stone thought would be a good place for a picnic. The hot links, even on bellies full to bursting, were astonishing, coarse crumbles of beef almost too intense to eat.

"When I was little," Stone said, wiping sauce from his cheek, "an Indonesian woman who worked for my father made food for me sometimes—fried rice, noodles, nothing fancy—and she'd always give me *sambals*, Indonesian sauces made from fruit and coconut and things. So the first time my parents took me to a real Indonesian restaurant, when I was about 10, I think, I piled on the *sambal* the way I had at home, except these *sambals* were *hot*." He reached for a toothpick. "By the time my hair stopped smoking, I was hooked."

In the next couple of weeks, we made pilgrimages to the namesakes of half his *oeuvre*. We visited Dong Il Jang (a Koreatown restaurant and an '82 piece based on Okinawa folk song and Smokey Robinson), where we ate raw, chile-marinated crab and a sweet sort of steak tartare spiked with raw pears. We went to the Korean dive Kong-Joo (a 1990 bit of Stone chinoiserie), where we had the house specialty, barbecued goat, and we stopped by the spot where Wail Me Do once stood. We went to the Little Tokyo sushi bar Shibucho—sushi is one of the few non-spicy foods Stone tolerates—where he joked with the sushi chef in fluent Japanese, and we had a beautiful sashimi of squid and Spanish mackerel cut into linguine-thin strips and served with *ponzu*. He refused to go back to Sukothai and Chao Praya.

He did agree to go back for a Korean fresh tofu casserole at Jangtoh, which inspired a favorite Stone composition, a spare, beautiful 1988 work built around the sounds of a melting ice sculpture as it dripped pebbles through a framework of gongs and bamboo built by artist Mineko Grimmer. "Actually," Stone said, "Jangtoh is only my second-favorite *soontofu* restaurant in L.A. But, the best place, Beverly Soontofu is a lousy name for a piece."

He called the waitress over to the table and asked her for chile sauce. She went over to the cold case, took out a jar of brick-red chile paste and carefully spooned a bit into Stone's tofu. When she finished, he took the jar, scooped out a walnut-sized chunk and stirred it into his food. The waitress gasped.

"There, now it's spicy," Stone said. "Just right." □

# Hail, Caesars!

*Some people judge a restaurant by the Caesar salad it makes.*

**Chasen's,** 9039 Beverly Blvd., West Hollywood. (213) 271-2168. *Style:* Hollywood legend packed with old-time stars and the people who come to see them. *Setting:* Paneled den. *Caesar Salad:* $8.50

**Delacey's Club 41,** 41 Delacey St., Pasadena. (818) 795-4141. *Style:* A cross between The Grill and Musso & Frank. Ask for the "Caesar fanatic" waiter who puts his all into making a perfect Caesar. *Setting:* New/old kind of place with huge bar, lots of wood and Corinthian columns. *Caesar Salad:* $6.75

**The Grill,** 9560 Dayton Way, Beverly Hills. (213) 276-0615. *Style:* Sensible fare served by professionals. *Setting:* Dark and comfy. *Caesar Salad:* $11.50 at lunch; $14.50 at dinner.

**Musso & Frank Grill,** 6667 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood. (213) 467-5123. *Style:* L.A. antique serving quality food quickly. *Setting:* Old wood, old wallpaper.

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Old Spice. *Caesar Salad:* $10.65.

**West Beach Cafe,** 60 Venice Blvd., Venice. (213) 823-5396. *Style:* Swank artists' watering hole. *Setting:* Good art on the walls; men with ponytails; Porsches in the parking lot. *Caesar Salad:* $7 at lunch; $8 at dinner.

**The Wine Bistro,** 11915 Ventura Blvd., Studio City. (818) 766-6233. *Style:* Bistro fare for studio expense accounts. *Setting:* Small with prominent bar and cozy banquettes. *Caesar Salad:* $5.95.

—*Kathie Jenkins*

# Carl Stone's Favorites—Some Guidelines

*Dong Il Jang, 3455 West 8th St., Los Angeles, (213) 383-5757. Open daily, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Full bar. American Express, MasterCard and Visa accepted. Dinner for two, food only, $16-$35. Recommended dishes: raw crab; bim bap (cold noodles); barbecued short ribs.*

*Gadberry's Barbecue, 5833 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, (213) 751-0753. Open Tue.-Sun., noon to 10 p.m., Fri.-Sat till 1 a.m. No alcohol. Cash only. Takeout only. Dinner for two, $9-$13. Recommended dishes: hot links; ribs.*

*Jangtoh Soontofu Restaurant, 4451 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, (213) 665-8664. Open daily, 6 a.m. to midnight. Beer and wine. Cash only. Dinner for two, food only, about $15. Recommended dish: combination soontofu.*

*Kong-Joo, 3029 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, (213) 737-9487. Open daily, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Beer and wine. Cash only. Dinner for two, food only, about $15. Recommended dishes: barbecued goat; goat stew.*

*Mr. Jim's Pit Bar-B-Que, 5403 S. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, (213) 778-6070. Open daily, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., till midnight Fri.-Sat. No alcohol. Cash only. Takeout only. Dinner for two, food only, $10-$15. Recommended dishes: beef ribs; spareribs.*

*Mom's Bar-B-Q, 1050 W. Imperial Highway, Los Angeles, (213) 756-8405. Open daily, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., till midnight Fri.-Sat. No alcohol. Cash only. Takeout only. Dinner for two, food only, $10-$15. Recommended dishes: beef ribs; hot links; sweet-potato pie.*

*Sanamluang, 5176 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, (213) 660-8006. Open daily, 10 a.m. to 5 a.m. No alcohol. Cash only. Dinner for two, food only, $8-$12. Recommended dishes: General noodles (with barbecued pork, roast duck and shrimp); beef curry noodles.*

*Shibucho, 333 S. Alameda Ave., third floor, in Little Tokyo Square, (213) 626-1184. Open daily for lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; for dinner, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Beer and wine. MasterCard and Visa accepted. Dinner for two, food only, $40-$60. Recommended dishes: sushi, sashimi.*

*Vim, S. 831 Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, (213) 480-8159. Open Wed.-Mon., 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Beer and wine. Cash only. Dinner for two, food only, $10-$18. Recommended dishes: crispy fried catfish with chile; hot and sour shrimp soup; glass-noodle salad.*

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